



PRESS STATEMENT BY THE OKOA UCHUMI CAMPAIGN

SOVEREIGN POWER BELONGS TO THE PEOPLE OF KENYA!

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Okoa Uchumi commends Kenyans, particularly the young patriots, for believing in the people's sovereign power, especially in the budget-making process. Their resolute dedication, sacrifice, and clarity of purpose embody a true constitutional moment that upholds the national values and principles outlined in Article 10 of our Constitution. Never again should they be ignored or second-guessed.

We send our sincere condolences to all the families of the young Kenyans who have lost their lives due to brutality from our security enforcement agencies while standing up for a better Kenya and future. We extend our best wishes for speedy and full recovery to the hundreds who are still in hospitals nursing injuries. Your efforts and sacrifices were not in vain because we join you and the nation in mourning the state's regrettable, unnecessary, and costly action. From Nairobi to Eldoret to Mombasa and to all corners of this country, we mourn together as a nation. We hope that the blood of the justice and freedom defenders will not be in vain.

Okoa Uchumi reiterates that Kenya does not have a revenue problem; ours is an expenditure problem. The call to reject the finance bill was premised, first and foremost, on the fact that Kenyans are no longer tolerant of additional taxation in a country where public services are deteriorating. Corruption and wastage are not met with the necessary force of the law required for economic terrorists who continue to brutalize the nation, and the appetite for expensive loans has yet to be curbed. Fundamentally, the high debt acquired over the past 10 years is not properly accounted for to warrant the aggressive push for repayment.

We take note of the President's concession not to raise additional reforms by returning the finance bill to parliament and promising changes in expenditure. We note that this deals a huge blow to the spirit of separation of power for Kenya's presidential system of government, where parliament ought to be the custodian of the public purse and thus the owners of the budget as per Articles 94 and 95 of the Constitution. We urge the elected representatives of the people to be vigilant and true to their role as representatives of the people, especially in the budgeting process as mandated by Article 118 of the Constitution, which mandates parliament to facilitate public participation. The process would have been rectified if parliament remained true to the people and not to the executive and their affiliated political formations.

1. To begin with, the parliament adopts a budget that is equal to the actual revenue collected in the year ending 2023/24. Therefore, we require that in similar breadth the appropriation bill be returned to parliament.
2. That parliament halts all debt repayments in the interim until there is a forensic debt audit into all debt acquired by the Kenyan state since the Constitution of 2010.
3. That half of the money proposed to be appropriated for debt repayment, including exorbitant interest rates be reallocated to priority sectors and investments in industries and productive sectors to create employment in the country for sustainable growth and development.
 - Education being the primary tool for development in the country, Ksh. 500 billion should be allocated to support deployment of adequate teachers, infrastructure development, roll out a fully funded school feeding program, support institutions of higher learning and TVETs.
 - Around Ksh 150 billion should be allocated to the public health sector to enhance life quality, specifically for the payment of medical interns, the purchase of drugs, free cancer treatment, and the eradication of diseases related to primary health. In the interim, we should abolish the non-inclusive and unresponsive social health insurance fund.
 - Conversely, the agricultural sector should see more funding with a floated budget of around Ksh 100 billion to support the hiring of agricultural extension officers, support sustainable organic farming, and caution farmers on climate change while educating them on smart agricultural practices while supporting fertilizer subsidy in relevant areas.
4. Parliament initiates all pending audits and recommends the removal of individuals from office due to any and all instances of misappropriation. with immediate effect.
5. Parliament enacts a policy for public transport for all public and state officials to reduce the recurrent expenditure used on domestic travel across all arms and levels of government.
6. Parliament enacts a law outlawing the position of advisors and instead requires all executive offices to rely on established state institutions that have ready mechanisms for accountability.
7. Following high allocations for maintenance and repairs in the State House and State offices, and purchases of new vehicles for the offices of the President, Deputy President and Prime Cabinet Secretary in the Financial Year 2023/24, NO ALLOCATIONS should go towards this in the current budget. The same approach should be in cutting parliament expenditures by reducing legislators' allowances, and where necessary reduce their salary to fund development in the country.
8. The First and Second Ladies' offices and the Prime Chief Secretary's offices should be scrapped because they are unconstitutional and unnecessarily inflate Kenya's expenditures. The unconstitutional positions of Chief Administrative Secretaries should be permanently vacated.
9. Instead of resorting to temporary solutions to unemployment, such as the export of labor, the government should strive to create an environment where our youth can start businesses and find employment within Kenya including creating an enabling

environment for business to thrive and be sustained as these are the ones that create employment.

In unity and solidarity, we stand firm in our commitment to building a just and prosperous Kenya for all. **#UtuNaUzalendo**

For more information, please feel free to contact Mulayi Muni mulayi.muni@tisa.or.ke

The Okoa Uchumi campaign is a civil society platform committed towards working with stakeholders to resolve Kenya's public debt crisis. The campaign advocates for balanced and equitable budgets as a means of achieving debt sustainability and economic inclusion. The campaign seeks to bolster constitutional safeguards in public debt management and to push for the accountability of political leaders in public debt management.